

**RSU 54/MSAD 54**

**MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES**

The Board recognizes that concussions and other head injuries are potentially serious and may result in significant brain damage and/or death if not recognized and managed properly. The Board adopts this policy to promote the safety of students participating in school-sponsored extracurricular athletic activities, including but not limited to interscholastic sports.

**TRAINING**

All school sponsored athletic activities pose a risk of concussion or head injury. As a consequence, all grade 7-12 student athletes will receive a baseline neurocognitive exam. The results of the exam will serve for both baseline testing and as post-concussive tool for return to play.

All coaches, including volunteer coaches, must undergo training in the identification and management of concussive and other head injuries prior to assuming their coaching responsibilities. The training must be consistent with such protocols as may be identified or developed by the Maine Department of Education (DOE) and include instruction in the use of such forms as the DOE may develop or require.

Coaches shall be required to undergo refresher training every two years or when protocols and/or forms have been revised.

**STUDENT AND PARENT INFORMATION**

Annually and/or prior to the beginning of each sports season, students and parents of students who will be participating in school-sponsored athletic activities will be provided information regarding

- A. The risk of concussion and other head injuries and the dangers associated with continuing to participate when a concussion or other head injury is suspected;
- B. The signs and symptoms of concussion and other head injuries; and
- C. The school unit's protocols for 1) removal from the activity when a student is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury, 2) evaluation, and 3) return to participation in the activity ("return to play").

The student and his/her parent(s) must sign a statement acknowledging that they have received and read this information before the student will be allowed to participate in any school- sponsored athletic activity.

## **MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSIVE AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES**

It is the responsibility of the coach of the activity to act in accordance with this policy when the coach recognizes that a student may be exhibiting signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with a concussion or other head injury.

Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a school-sponsored athletic activity including but not limited to competition, practice or scrimmage, must be removed from the activity immediately. The student and his/her parent(s) will be informed of the need for an evaluation for brain injury before the student will be allowed to return to the activity.

No student will be permitted to return to the activity or to participate in any other school-sponsored athletic activity on the day of the suspected concussion.

Any student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury shall be prohibited from further participation in school-sponsored athletic activities until he/she has been evaluated and received written medical clearance to do so from a licensed health care provider who is qualified and trained in concussion management.

Coaches and other school personnel shall comply with the student's health care provider's (trained in concussion management) recommendations in regard to gradual return to participation. No student will be permitted to return to full participation (competition) until cleared to do so. More than one evaluation by the student's health care provider may be necessary before the student is cleared for full participation.

If at any time during the return to play program signs or symptoms of a concussion are observed, the student must be removed from the activity and referred to his/her health care provider (trained in concussion management) for re-evaluation.

## **COGNITIVE CONSIDERATIONS**

School personnel should be alert to cognitive and academic issues that may be experienced by students who have suffered a concussion or other head injury, including but not limited to difficulty with concentration, organization, long-and-short term

memory and sensitivity to bright lights and sounds, and accommodate a gradual return to full participation in academic activities as appropriate, based on the recommendations of the student's health care provider and appropriate designated school personnel (e.g., 504 Coordinator).

#### CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Superintendent will appoint a concussion management team including a school administrator to be responsible, under the administrative supervision of the Superintendent, to make recommendations related to implementation of this policy. The concussion management team may include the Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer, school nurse and one or more principals or assistant principals, the school physician and such other school personnel or consultants as the Superintendent deems appropriate.

Parents and student-athletes: Please read, sign, and keep a copy. You must turn in a signed form prior to the start of practice.

### CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your student-athlete reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

**Symptoms may include one or more of the following:**

- Headaches
- “Pressure in head”
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- “Don’t feel right”
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Repeating the same question/comment
- Amnesia

**Signs observed by teammates, parents or coaches include:**

- Appears dazed
- Vacant facial expression
- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily or displays incoordination
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit
- Can’t recall events after hit
- Seizures or convulsions
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Loses consciousness

This document is adapted from the CDC and the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Concussion in Sport Consensus Statement (2009)

**RSU54/MSAD54 CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET**

**What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns to soon?**

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries, and concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete’s safety.

**If you think your child has suffered a concussion**

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours.

RSU54/MSAD54 requires the consistent and uniform implementation of well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years and reflected in Board policy:

Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a school-sponsored athletic activity including but not limited to competition, practice or scrimmage, must be removed from the activity immediately. . .

No student will be permitted to return to the activity or to participate in any other school-sponsored athletic activity on the day of the suspected concussion.

Any student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury shall be prohibited from further participation in school-sponsored athletic activities until he/she has been evaluated and received written medical clearance to do so from a licensed health care provider who is qualified and trained in concussion management.

You should also inform your child’s coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it’s better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion>

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Student-athlete Name Printed      Student-athlete Signature      Date

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Parent or Legal Guardian Printed      Parent or Legal Guardian Signature      Date